United Nations A/54/943

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 July 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 20 (b)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Letter dated 19 July 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to convey for your kind attention, the statement issued by the Ministry of External Relations on 16 July 2000 on the violation of the declared ceasefire by the rebel movement, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annex as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 20 (b).

(*Signed*) Mubarak **Rahmtalla**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

00-54430 (E) 250700

Annex to the letter dated 19 July 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Statement issued on 16 July 2000 by the Ministry of External Relations of the Sudan concerning the rebel movement's violation of the ceasefire

1. The Sudanese Government has continued to alert world public opinion to the fact that the SPLA rebel movement is lacking in seriousness whenever it declares a ceasefire for humanitarian purposes in the greater Bahr al-Ghazal region and that it is exploiting this tactic in order to gain time and build up and redeploy its forces with a view to launching offensives and achieving military victory. It has never, at any time, believed in a peaceful solution to the issue of the South.

2. On 19 April 2000, the Sudanese Government declared a halt to aerial bombing in the zones of operations other than for purposes of self-defence. This was followed by the statement of 27 April 2000 in which the Government declared an extension of the ceasefire for a three-month period in the greater Bahr al-Ghazal region so that humanitarian assistance could reach those affected by the war in that area. In another statement, on 3 May 2000, the Sudanese Government expressed the wish that United Nations agencies should use the railway line between Kosti and Wau to bring humanitarian assistance to residents of Bahr al-Ghazal. The Government also acceded to requests from the European Union, the United States of America and the international community for a halt to the operations of the *Murhalin* militia in Bahr al-Ghazal in order to ensure the delivery of relief to those in need.

3. In antithesis to all the positive initiatives taken by the Sudanese Government, the rebel movement exploited this situation and carried out the following operations:

(a) On 15 June 2000, it launched a treacherous offensive against the town of Gogrial in Warab State in the greater Bahr al-Ghazal region.

(b) The movement resumed its offensive against many areas in the greater Bahr al-Ghazal region, attacking Gogrial, Aweil and Kuajena on 20 and 21 June 2000 and continuing its offensive until it had occupied the town of Gogrial.

(c) The rebel movement is now engaged in offensives in many areas of Bahr al-Ghazal in which it had declared a ceasefire. This is illustrated by: an attempt to cut the Raja-Wau road; an attempt to cut the Babanusa-Aweil-Wau road; the seizure of the Lool bridge between Aweil and Babanusa; the occupation of civilian installations along the railway line between Babanusa and Wau; and the targeting of civilian areas in many parts of northern Upper Nile State and the greater Equatoria region.

4. The targeting by the rebel movement of the railway line between Babanusa and Wau, to which the international community, the United States and the European Union attach the greatest importance for the delivery of relief of those in need in Bahr al-Ghazal, confirms that the movement holds international public opinion in contempt and does not honour its own declarations. It also confirms the fact, as noted by the Sudanese Government and stated by Bona Manual in his open letter to

John Garang last May, that he (Garang) has never cared whether innocent people live or die and that his sole objective is to achieve his own personal ambitions over the dead bodies of the innocent inhabitants of the South for whose sake he claims to be waging war.

5. As confirmed by the statement by the Presidency of the European Union of 30 June 2000 and the statement made by British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Peter Hain on 3 July 2000, the military offensives launched by the rebel movement against parts of Bahr al-Ghazal, the targeting of roads and railways and the extension of military operations to civilian population centres all herald a repetition of the tragedy of 1998, when the movement launched similar operations in the same area that had the result of exacerbating the famine and causing a humanitarian catastrophe that cost the lives of thousands of innocent people.

6. The Sudanese Government once more alerts the international community to the irresponsible conduct of the rebel movement, to its ongoing violation of the ceasefire that it declared and to the fact that it has boycotted the peace talks and thus placed the lives and property of civilian citizens in jeopardy. It calls upon the international community to condemn this conduct in the strongest terms and to bring pressure to bear on the movement so as to compel it to comply with its own declarations, halt military operations and ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need in all parts of southern Sudan.

7. Once again, the Sudanese Government confirms its commitment to the ceasefire that has been declared and renews its call for agreement on a comprehensive ceasefire and the achievement of a lasting peace. At the same time, however, it affirms its right to respond to aggression and to protect the lives and property of its citizens. It also affirms that it cannot stand idly by while the rebel movement occupies the towns of Bahr al-Ghazal one after another.